



# Safety On The Line



A service of the NASA/KSC Safety & Mission Assurance Directorate – December 2009

**"Take safety home for the holidays."**

## Holiday Safety & Health Tips

## Holiday Stress & Overtime

### Decorations:

- Inspect all electric lights and decorations for damage or wear. Cracked sockets, frayed or bare wires and loose connections pose a fire and/or shock hazard.
- Do not connect more than three light strings together. Check extension cords ratings, and do not overload.
- Ensure the Underwriters Laboratory (UL) mark is on packages of lights before purchase. For existing light strands, the mark is located on the tag next to the plug.
- Wear gloves while decorating with spun glass "angel hair." It can irritate your eyes and skin. A common substitute is non-flammable cotton. Do not spray artificial snow onto either item, the combination may burn rapidly.
- Follow the directions when spraying artificial snow on any surface. The spray can irritate the lungs if inhaled.

**Fireplaces:** Do not dispose of evergreens or wreaths in a fireplace or wood stove. They are likely to flare out of control and send flames and smoke into the room. Also, do not burn wrapping paper in the fireplace because it often contains metallic materials which can be toxic if burned.

**Candles:** Never use lighted candles near trees, boughs, curtains/drapes, or with any potentially flammable item.

**Toys and Gifts:** Be especially careful when you choose gifts for infants or small children. Ensure anything you give them is big enough not to get caught in the throat, nose or ears. Avoid items with small parts that can be pulled or broken off. If you have several children, keep in mind that younger children may want to play with the older kids' toys.

**Plants:** Small children may think that holiday plants look good enough to eat. Some plants can cause severe stomach problems. This includes: mistletoe, holly berries, Jerusalem cherry, and amaryllis. Keep plants out of reach.

**Food and Cooking:** The holidays often mean preparing large meals for family and friends. Wash hands, utensils, sink, and anything else that has come in contact with raw poultry. Note that a stuffed bird takes longer to cook. For questions concerning holiday turkey preparation and cooking call the USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline at 1-800-535-4555. **Refrigerate or freeze leftovers in covered shallow containers (less than two inches deep) within two hours after cooking. Date the leftovers for future use.**

**Stress:** The holiday season is one of the most stressful times of the year. You can't avoid stress completely, but you can give yourself some relief.

- Allow enough time to shop to avoid having to hurry through stores and parking lots.
- Only plan to do a reasonable number of errands per trip.
- When shopping, make several trips out to the car to drop off packages rather than trying to carry too many items all at once.
- Take time out for yourself.** Relax, read, or enjoy your favorite hobby at your own pace.

**Overtime:** Researchers found that people who worked overtime at any job were **61%** more likely to sustain a work-related injury than those who worked their regular hours. Why? Extra hours are exhausting. And when you're tired, you're vulnerable to accidents. To stay safe, keep overtime to a minimum, when holiday commitments take up your free time. Get lots of sleep and keep stress under control. If you can't cut back at work, take breaks as needed.

## "O Christmas Tree"

Everyone enjoys a beautiful natural Christmas Tree. If your household is one of more than 33 million other American homes with a natural tree, heed the sales person's suggestion—"Keep the tree watered." Christmas trees account for 200 fires annually, resulting in 6 deaths, 25 injuries and more than \$6 million in property damage. Typically shorts in electrical lights or open flames from candles, lighters or matches ignite tree fires. Well-watered trees are not a problem while dry and neglected trees can be. The National Institute of Standards and Technology determined that when fire touches a dry tree it takes only three seconds to be completely ablaze. Well watered trees on the other hand did not ignite even when in direct contact to a flame.

***HAVE A WONDERFULLY  
SAFE HOLIDAY SEASON!***

Notes and Additional Resources  
1: [http://www.usfa.dhs.gov/citizens/all\\_citizens/home\\_fire\\_prev/holiday-seasonal/treefire.shtm](http://www.usfa.dhs.gov/citizens/all_citizens/home_fire_prev/holiday-seasonal/treefire.shtm)



Do you have questions, comments, or an article you would like to submit?  
Contact Brian Gloade at 867-9436, fax number 867-1120, mail code SA-E/MEI or e-mail.  
**Safety on the Line** is also on the Web at <http://sotl.ksc.nasa.gov>.